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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 280th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 22 January 1996, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mrs. BELEMBAOGO

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 4)

Croatia (CRC/C/8/Add.19; CRC/C.11/WP.1) (continued)

1. The CHAIRPERSON said that, following the replies given by the delegation of Croatia at the preceding meeting, the Committee should consider the section of the list of issues entitled "General principles".

2. Mr. HAMMARBERG noted that paragraph 336 of Croatia's report stated that 12,314 children did not attend school. It was in the best interests of children deprived of their family environment that each case should be studied individually and that, for each child, the solution chosen (foreign adoption, placement in a foster family, or a temporary solution until the end of the war) should be that which best corresponded to those interests. With regard to respect for the child's own views (art. 12 of the Convention), the Committee welcomed the responses provided by the delegation. It recommended that a study should be carried out to determine how that important article of the Convention should be implemented by creating a favourable environment in schools and, particularly in families.

3. The Committee welcomed the measures taken by the Government of Croatia in response to the atrocities committed during and after operation "storm" and the events of August 1995, particularly the prosecution of over 1,000 persons suspected of criminal activities. It hoped that the victims of those atrocities would be duly compensated. It also welcomed the fact that the deadline for return to Croatia had been eliminated. It hoped that the bureaucratic and other problems which had arisen at border crossings would be solved so that those returning to Croatia would feel welcome there. It would like to receive further information on the promulgation of laws concerning temporarily confiscated property.

4. While the Committee recognized the importance of the Constitution, which was extremely modern in its treatment of the rights of minorities, and that of the Special Committee for Human Rights and the Rights of Ethnic and National Communities or Minorities (para. 30 of the report), it feared that a latent feeling of insecurity might exist among the members of various minorities owing to the fact that those who harassed such minorities had gone unpunished. That feeling would also affect children. The Committee should consider whether it would be appropriate to establish a special mechanism to hear and act on complaints regarding the rights of minorities in order further to encourage tolerance of and respect for minorities.

5. Mrs. BABIC (Croatia), replying to Mr. Hammarberg, said that the Government of Croatia was well aware of the problems which would be associated with the reintegration of refugees whose property or dwellings had been occupied by others. The measures taken would be based on two principles: first, property rights would not be violated and, second, a safety net would be established to protect those who would have to vacate the dwellings they were occupying. Another dwelling, educational opportunities for their children, health care and social services must be provided for them and a

whole infrastructure must be created. The Croatian Government was still trying to find solutions and, guided by the principles to which she had just referred, would solve problems on a case-by-case basis.

6. Mr. Hammarberg had spoken of the need to establish a special mechanism to hear complaints concerning the rights of minorities. The problem in Croatia was that not enough use was made of the existing laws and machinery, particularly the possibility of basing complaints of human rights violations on the Constitution itself. Some non-governmental organizations received more complaints than the official channels. In 1994, for example, there had been no complaints of violations of the rights of children, and that proved that not enough use was made of the existing agencies.

7. Mrs. SIMONOVIC (Croatia) said that there was a new democratic environment in the Republic of Croatia, which welcomed any observers and rapporteurs of international organizations who wished to visit the country to gather information on the human rights situation. The current situation was nevertheless extremely complex. Despite all its efforts to deal with the problem, the Government of Croatia would welcome any suggestions from the Committee and the international community.

8. Compensating all those who had suffered from the four years of war placed a very heavy burden on Croatia. The number of disabled ex-servicemen, cases of property damage, deaths and disappearances - there were 3,000 people whose fate was unknown - was an indication of the magnitude of the problems to be solved. All victims of the war would have an equal right to compensation, but the amounts awarded would depend on Croatia's financial resources and the assistance it would receive. The functioning of the democratic system and economic recovery would be the best guarantees of respect for all human rights, particularly those of children.

9. Mrs. UJEVIC-BULJETA (Croatia) said that many complaints of discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin were unjustified. In the placement of disabled children in foster families, for which there was a long waiting list, and the award of custody to children whose parents were separated, for example, those who considered the wait too long or whose request had not been met attributed that wait or refusal to their ethnic origin. In fact, that was not the case: it was clear on examination that the decisions in question had been taken for excellent reasons.

10. The CHAIRPERSON requested the members of the Committee to formulate their questions and observations on civil rights and freedoms (paras. 15 and 16 of the list of issues).

11. Mr. KOLOSOV said that it was not enough to grant children the same civil rights and freedoms as adults (paras. 132 and 158 of the initial report). He wondered whether Croatia planned to promulgate specific legislation to recognize the particular rights and freedoms of children, even before they had reached the age of majority. The inequality of citizens with regard to their race, colour, sex, etc. (para. 135, lines 9-10), which might result from the limitation of rights and freedoms in time of war, was totally contrary to the Convention. Noting that the report had been submitted in the original Croatian with an English translation, he wondered whether there had not been a

mistranslation. Referring to paragraph 145, he said that measures for the protection of children from information (xenophobic and racist propaganda) and material (military equipment) injurious to their well-being were essential in Croatia.

12. He had been extremely surprised to read (para. 151 of the report) that a student who had chosen to receive religious education did not have the right to give it up before the end of the school year. That restriction was contrary to article 14, paragraph 3, of the Convention. He was also concerned by the fact that the Constitution guaranteed the right of parents to choose the religion of their children (para. 152 of the report), without even mentioning that the child's views should be taken into consideration. Furthermore, while it was understandable that the right of foreigners to establish an association should be subject to limitations (para. 155 of the report), foreign children's freedom of association should be duly protected.

13. With regard to paragraph 163 of the report, he wondered whether there had been periodic monitoring of the situation of children placed in psychiatric institutions. With respect to the expulsion of foreign alcoholic or drug addicted children, mentioned in the same paragraph, he wondered how that would be done: would the child be expelled without his or her parents? Would the child be expelled with his or her parents even if they were neither alcoholics nor drug addicts? He wondered how, in practice, minors placed in correctional institutions remained in contact with their families, since the Republic of Croatia had only two correctional homes for under-age offenders, one for boys and one for girls (para. 169). While the country was not enormous, that did not seem to permit weekly visits from the parents of the minors in question; such visits would, at least, entail considerable expense.

14. The policy for the acquisition of Croatian citizenship by Serbs and Muslims seemed to be a cause for concern. The Committee had been informed that, if a person requesting a new passport had not been born within the territory of Croatia, in the former Yugoslavia, but had lived there for a long time and resided or had resided there, the waiting period required was excessively long and there had even been cases where a passport had been refused. Many refugees were not returning to Croatia because nothing was being done to encourage them to do so. The Committee would like to receive further information on the matter.

15. Mrs. SIMONOVIC (Croatia), referring to the possibility of promulgating laws in Croatia to protect the civil rights and freedoms of children, said that, according to article 134 of the Constitution, the international instruments duly ratified by Croatia were part of domestic law; they were directly applicable in the Republic of Croatia and had an authority superior to that of laws. The civil rights and freedoms of children guaranteed by the Convention were thus respected in Croatia. With regard to paragraph 135 of the report, she confirmed that the sentence in question ("the scope of the qualification ... can result in the inequality of citizens with regard to their race, colour ...") was wrong. Article 17 of the Constitution stated exactly the reverse ("may not result in the inequality of citizens ...").

16. Mrs. HRABAR (Croatia) stressed the fact that the Croatian Constitution included freedom of religion among its guarantees. It was for practical reasons that a child was not authorized to drop out of religious instruction during the school year. Moreover, that rule applied to all school subjects.

17. Mrs. UJEVIC-BULJETA (Croatia) noted that the provisions on the expulsion of vagrant children applied only to those whose parents were not Croatian citizens and did not live in Croatia. A child was never separated from his or her parents. The children in question were first placed in special centres; the International Red Cross was asked to find their parents and, if necessary, to escort the children back to their country. There was only one correctional home for children in Croatia, but the Government was attempting to establish other such centres in every district. If the parents were able to do so, they contributed to their child's support. It was very rare for such children to be placed in a centre far from their parents' place of residence and, if the parents did not have sufficient resources to travel, they received financial assistance. During the school holidays, the children could visit their parents. In any case, the authorities were careful to maintain the ties between parents and children.

18. Mrs. CVJETKO (Croatia) said that scarcely 140 children in her country had been placed in a correctional institution. With regard to the granting of Croatian citizenship, the Government made inquiries regarding those who had been outside the country for five years. If, after consulting the relevant United Nations agencies, it was established that a person had not committed any crimes against humanity, he or she was given Croatian citizenship.

19. Mrs. BABIC (Croatia) gave her own case as an example. She was of Serbian origin and had been nationalized a Croatian in 1986. Formerly, it had been very easy to become Croatian: it had been enough to prove that one lived in Croatia. Currently, the transitional measures protected all residents of Croatia, whatever their ethnic origin. However, in certain regions to which the State did not have easy access, those procedures were more lengthy because people did not have the documents to prove that they lived in Croatia. In the liberated areas, the authorities were currently in a position to establish the status of individuals who requested Croatian citizenship by collecting the relevant documents. The Government was also in the process of setting up a project to establish a list of elderly Croatians living in those regions so that they could receive a pension and public assistance.

20. Mr. HAMMARBERG, referring to Croatian citizenship, cited the report of the former Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia (E/CN.4/1994/47). At the time when the report had been written, Croatian citizenship law had been based on a policy of "continuity" between citizenship in the former Socialist Republic of Croatia and citizenship in the Republic of Croatia, which had had the effect of relegating to the status of foreigners all citizens of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who legally resided in the Socialist Republic of Croatia, but were not citizens of that country. There was an exception to that rule for persons considered members of the "Croatian people". Those who were not members of the "Croatian people"

were obliged to meet more stringent conditions for naturalization in order to become citizens. That policy had elements of discrimination and he would like to have further information on the matter.

21. Mrs. BABIC (Croatia), replying to Mr. Hammarberg's question, said that the law on Croatian citizenship protected the rights of Croatian minorities residing in other countries and allowed them to apply for Croatian citizenship. Foreigners must demonstrate their knowledge of the Croatian language. That provision must not be regarded as discriminating against other persons; moreover, other countries had similar provisions with regard to their nationals who resided abroad. According to the information available to her, no one had complained of having been denied Croatian citizenship.

22. Mrs. SIMONOVIC (Croatia) said that the legal experts from the Council of Europe who had visited Croatia in 1993 had not felt that the law on Croatian citizenship was discriminatory in nature. The majority of requests for citizenship papers had been granted. There was still the problem of the return of the Serbian population which had left Croatia during operation "Storm" in August 1995. Those people had Yugoslav passports which referred to Knin, a city in Croatia, but it was difficult for the Croatian authorities to determine where they had been registered and whether they were entitled to Croatian citizenship.

23. Mrs. CVJETKO (Croatia) noted that, after operation "Lightning", which had been carried out in western Slavonia, social workers and representatives of various Government agencies had immediately gone there and had distributed citizenship papers to individuals so that they could obtain social or medical assistance. There were still problems associated with persons who had left Croatia five years previously. It was not known where they had lived during that time.

24. Miss MASON requested more information on the implementation of the rights of the child in Croatia, about which there appeared to be some confusion. The report (CRC/C/8/Add.19) seemed to describe a country at peace, whereas Croatia was emerging from a war. She asked what impact presidential decrees, which were ultra vires in nature, had had on the rights of children, particularly with regard to information. The Committee had been informed that the media functioned as an arm of the political system. She wondered how, in that case, the rights of the child to access to appropriate information and to free expression were guaranteed under current conditions in Croatia.

25. Mr. HAMMARBERG, coming back to the question of citizenship, said that, according to the document he had just mentioned, the law in question referred not only to persons living outside of Croatia, but also to those who had not previously held Croatian citizenship, but were living in Croatia. He requested further information on the matter and said that it would be easier to consider the problem from the opposite point of view; in other words, to determine whether there were persons living in Croatia and wishing to become citizens of that country who had lived in that region, or in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and who had not been treated on an equal footing with others who had applied for Croatian citizenship.

26. Mrs. KARP said that she would also like further information on the issue of citizenship. According to the information available to her, the problem lay not only in the criteria for granting Croatian citizenship, but also in the fact that the documents issued by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were not accepted. She wondered what policy the Croatian Government had implemented in that respect and by what means the persons in question could obtain the documents they needed.

27. Mrs. HRABAR (Croatia), referring to the right of the child to information and the statement that the media functioned as an arm of the political system, said it must be borne in mind that Croatia had just experienced a period of war. It was a new country which, even without the war, would not have been in a position to implement immediately all the rights of the child. The Croatian Government was nevertheless attempting to do so.

28. The Constitution guaranteed all citizens the right to information. Children, and particularly young children, were a special case. The Government considered that parents, who were responsible for their children, had the right and obligation to inform them. She emphasized that a book informing children of their rights published in Croatian by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was distributed in the schools and could be consulted in public libraries.

29. Mrs. SIMONOVIC (Croatia), replying to the question concerning the conditions for the granting of Croatian citizenship, said that the problem in that area had been solved some time previously. Those who were prepared to accept Croatian nationality under that country's legal system would obtain all the documents they needed.

30. The CHAIRPERSON suggested that the Committee should move on to the section of the list of issues entitled "Family environment and alternative care" (paras. 17-19).

31. Mrs. BADRAN said that the members of the Committee were well aware of the Government's efforts to build a new society. However, the reconstruction process sometimes gave a country the opportunity to reconsider existing mechanisms in order to avoid the errors of the past and find new ways of responding to the many demands within the limits of available resources. Bearing that in mind, Croatia should cooperate closely with Governments and both national and international non-governmental organizations participating in the reconstruction in order to optimize efforts to improve the situation of children. In view of the size of the task faced by the various partners, the relations among them must be clarified and the role of each clearly defined.

32. Croatia's report mentioned a number of provisions related to family welfare. However, it was important to remember that it was not enough to adopt laws; it was also necessary to set up mechanisms for their application and the detection of possible violations.

33. It was also clear from the report of Croatia that parents too often lost custody of their children, for example, because of insufficient income or illness. In all cases, solutions must be sought to allow children to remain

in the family environment. In some countries, the social services provided parents who were ill with someone to help them and granted financial assistance to poor families. Croatia might emulate their experience.

34. Paragraph 204 stated that the procedure for adopting a child could be initiated without the parents' consent. That was, to say the least, surprising. It was essential that the parents should be consulted; when such a measure was unavoidable, no effort must be spared to persuade them to accept it.

35. Paragraph 209 of the report stated that the existing laws had no provision to permit a child to meet with his parents while they were serving a prison sentence, regardless of the crime. Unless there was great danger to the child, it was not necessary to separate him completely from his parents, especially when the sentence was a long one.

36. With regard to the placement of children separated from their parents in foster homes, she wondered whether that practice produced the expected results. Were families who agreed to accept a child doing so in order to ensure the child's well-being or were they simply seeking monetary gain? She also wondered whether such children might not be exploited.

37. The Croatian delegation had also mentioned the existence of an autonomous women's shelter which was not under State jurisdiction. Since that was a new concept, further information on that type of institution would be welcome.

38. In view of the fact that highway accidents were very frequent in Croatia and were the principal cause of death of persons under 14 years of age, she asked what measures had been taken to combat that scourge.

39. According to the information provided to the Committee, the body parts of a deceased person could be taken for transplant unless the deceased had opposed it in a written statement while alive. She wondered whether it would not be better, to avoid any abuse, to prohibit such removal unless written permission had been given prior to death.

40. It was also stated that the parents of seriously disabled children had a right to take paid leave until the children had reached the age of seven. It might be asked whether such a measure was as humane as it appeared. In addition to the fact that the effort required of parents might be psychologically and physically exhausting, they risked being permanently cut off from the workforce.

41. According to the statistics provided by the State party, there was only one child with AIDS in the 13-14-year age group and one child in the 15-19-year age group. That seemed too good to be true. She wondered whether the record-keeping system was not faulty; if so, it should be improved.

42. Since the Croatian delegation had mentioned that various training seminars were being carried out, she asked whether members of the social services also received training before their recruitment. She hoped that the seminars and workshops were regularly monitored, since it was important that the methodologies used should be continually improved.

43. In the field of education, there was considerable discussion of minorities, refugees and displaced persons. Given the size of the problem, there was a need to deal with the discriminatory practices to which children belonging to those categories were subjected, as for example, in school, where the report stated that, because of the shortage of staff, several groups of students must rotate during the day, something that was harmful to the quality of their education.

44. Mrs. KARP said that, under the legislation in force, children who were separated from their parents for their own protection were not consulted during the procedure, although that was not the case in divorce or adoption proceedings. She asked whether there was any intention to include provisions in the laws currently being drafted to allow the child to express an opinion and, above all, to appeal against a decree of separation and whether such a decree was reviewed at regular intervals. She also wished to know whether, in cases of domestic violence, there were mechanisms for prosecution once a complaint had been filed, whether there were shelters for the victims and, since it was currently assumed that it was the victim who would leave the family home, whether there was any intention to include provisions in the laws currently being drafted for the removal from the family environment of the person who had committed acts of violence.

45. Mr. HAMMARBERG, noting that the Croatian delegation had mentioned several bills which had been submitted to Parliament for adoption, asked whether they included provisions prohibiting corporal punishment in the home, as was already the case in the schools. He also asked whether there were plans to launch an information campaign to make it clearly understood by all that the Government would not tolerate any form of domestic violence and whether there were training programmes for those responsible for dealing with the victims.

46. Mr. KOLOSOV, referring to the situation of migrant workers from the former Yugoslavia, asked whether they still had ties with their family members who had remained behind, how their interests were protected by the consulates general in the countries to which they had emigrated and whether Croatia planned to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

47. Miss MASON noted that paragraph 200 of the report stated that, when parents failed to visit their children, the State could initiate proceedings against them and take legal measures. She asked what those proceedings and measures entailed. In addition, paragraph 227 of the report stated that a minor over the age of 15 who was removed from his or her family to be placed in an institution or with a foster family must be consulted. She wondered what would happen if the child refused to be separated from his or her parents. Paragraph 207 stated that a minor could be held in custody for only one month and that custody could be prolonged for a maximum of two months. She wondered what type of detention was referred to.

48. The Committee had been informed that a new law was being prepared on sexual abuse, incest and the exploitation of children for pornographic purposes. She wondered whether studies had been carried out to determine the extent of those problems. She also asked what procedure was followed in cases of incest or sexual abuse within a family. Was the child immediately

separated from the parents or was it the person guilty of exploitation who was obliged to leave? Were there health and sex education courses in Croatia and, if so, at what level were they provided?

49. The report also stated that, when a girl under the age of 20 became pregnant, her parents were immediately informed. She asked whether that was not an invasion of privacy and at what age boys and girls could receive medical advice and sex education without their parents being informed.

50. Mrs. KARP asked how society had reacted to the new philosophy of children's participation. She wondered whether that philosophy was widely accepted and, if families' attitudes had not changed, what measures the authorities were taking to increase their sensitivity to the matter.

51. Mrs. SARDENBERG, referring to the harmful psychological and physical effects of war on children, asked to what extent teachers were working to restore children's desire to study and encourage their self-fulfilment. Paragraph 316 of the report stated that "the process of replacing a single ideology and the old monolithic school system has been slowed down by the war and the difficult economic situation". She asked whether the Government planned to adopt laws and launch programmes to speed up that process. With regard to the harmful effects of war, the Committee would like to know how the problem of land-mines was dealt with in Yugoslavia and whether there were awareness campaigns in the schools.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 5.20 p.m.

52. Mrs. HRABAR (Croatia), replying to the question whether children were too easily separated from their parents, said that the law on marriage and family relations included a number of measures to protect the best interests of the child. When a child was in danger, his or her parents were automatically stripped of their parental rights. That decision was taken by the courts, which had recourse to it only in cases of serious negligence or abuse, and was reviewed annually. The measure terminated all relations between the child and the parents, whose only obligation was to continue to support the child.

53. There were also very rare cases when children were put up for adoption without their parents being consulted, for example, when a parent had not been heard of for six months or was of unsound mind.

54. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was empowered to authorize children to visit their parents while the latter were in prison. That authorization could be refused only if it would be harmful to the best interests of the child.

55. Placement in foster families was not very widespread in Croatia. The Croatian authorities preferred to have recourse to adoption, particularly since possible foster families were often motivated by the children's work potential, particularly in agricultural regions, or by the financial assistance which the children might receive from the State.

56. Mrs. UJEVIC-BULJETA (Croatia) explained that the "Autonomous Women's House" was a charitable institution established several years previously.

The current administrators of that institution, who had had no special training in social work, displayed very feminist attitudes and urged the women who came to them to take a very radical stance, which sometimes prevented the social assistance centres from carrying out their mission of reconciliation in cases of divorce or separation. Moreover, when the courts took a decision concerning the custody of children in cases of divorce, they generally preferred to hear the child immediately after the parents. However, the members of the institution in question opposed such procedures. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare had proposed a compromise solution which appeared to have been accepted by the organization, but it had subsequently changed its mind and the situation was currently at an impasse. Nevertheless, the Ministry was wholly in favour of the creation of such shelters and was committed to supporting all private projects of that kind.

57. Mrs. HRABAR (Croatia), referring to infant mortality, said that many children had been killed or wounded during the war. The lives of children continued to be threatened by traffic problems and by the mines which were still scattered across Croatia as a result of the war. With regard to traffic accidents, the Ministry of the Interior had launched an awareness campaign which, judging by the statistics, seemed to be bearing fruit. A campaign to teach children not to touch any explosive devices which they might find had also been launched and a videocassette on the subject had been made with the help of UNICEF and was currently being shown in the schools. As far as organ transplants were concerned, she emphasized that the Croatian authorities were not satisfied with the current regulations on the matter. The new law which was being drafted would be based on other criteria.

58. Mrs. BABIC (Croatia), replying to a comment by Mrs. Badran, explained that the leave granted to the parents of a seriously disabled child was a right and the length of the leave depended on the person exercising that right. Consequently, the leave did not necessarily have to be for seven years and adjustments could be made.

59. With regard to the migrant workers in the former Yugoslavia whom Mr. Kolosov had mentioned, she said that most of the persons displaced in the former Yugoslavia during the war were Croatians. Croatia hoped, of course, that those Croatian citizens would return and the authorities were doing everything possible to help families reunite. In that regard, she stressed the excellent cooperation between the Governments of Germany and Croatia. In addition, the various ministries involved were currently studying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which the Government planned to ratify.

60. The incidence of AIDS in Croatia was very low and, to date, only one child had been infected with the disease. There was a centre in Zagreb devoted to the fight against AIDS; it worked closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) and a special AIDS prevention and public information programme had been set up.

61. With regard to the law on the marriage and family relations, the Croatian authorities had wanted to allow a child whose parents were in the process of divorce to participate in the proceedings and express his opinion. The original idea, when the law was being written, had been to follow the example

of the United States. It had been decided that the best interests of the child should be protected by the social services, which were responsible for participating in the proceedings on the child's behalf.

62. Mrs. HRABAR (Croatia), replying to a question by Mrs. Karp, said that there had been 154 reports of child neglect in 1994. Such acts were generally committed by male family members and were reported by mothers, social workers or the police. There were also cases where the prosecutor's office, having been informed of a case of juvenile delinquency, tried to discover whether child neglect in the home could be the cause of the minor's delinquent behaviour and asked the police to investigate. In cases of neglect or brutality affecting children within the family, the courts could decide to separate a child temporarily from his or her family. It would be preferable to allow the child to remain with the mother and to separate both of them from the father, who was often responsible for the acts in question, but Croatia did not have enough shelters for mothers and their children.

63. Lastly, with regard to cases of corporal punishment, it must be stressed that it was sometimes difficult to determine the exact truth. While the rights of the child must be protected, the legal system was also responsible for protecting those of the accused. Moreover, the existing legislation referred to "cases of flagrant violence". Since it was a very subjective matter to determine at what point violence became "flagrant", the new law would include only the term "violence".

64. Mrs. UJEVIC-BUJETA (Croatia) explained that the provisions on corporal punishment in the family were identical to those of the Convention, which stated that children should not be submitted to any form of humiliation or violence and that they had the right to demand protection from the competent authorities. Furthermore, according to those provisions, parents were responsible for protecting their children from any corporal or psychological punishment on the part of others.

65. The phenomena of child pornography and prostitution were not very widespread in Croatia. In 1993 and 1994, there had been only six recorded cases of prostitution and only one case of child pornography. The new law that had been adopted made the making of pornographic videocassettes involving children a crime punishable by 1 to 10 years' imprisonment. The exploitation of children for the purposes of pornography and the furnishing of pornographic material to children had also become crimes punishable under the Penal Code. In reality, the new provisions were all in keeping with United Nations recommendations against the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution.

66. Mrs. SIMONOVIC (Croatia) drew the Committee's attention to a brochure which had been distributed to them and which stated that a large number of health and educational institutions had been destroyed during the war. In that regard, she particularly wished to thank UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR and all the Governments which had helped Croatia rebuild some of its institutions.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.